

IN THE SPECIFICATION:

Please replace paragraph [0109] with the following amended paragraph:

[0109] In the central part of the movement range where the mask passes through the central line of the optical system, the encoder system can be calibrated using a reference mask (e.g., an ultra-flat mask made of Zerodur) on which a large number of reference marks are printed and exposed. The aerial images of the reference marks are detected by a transmission image sensor mounted on the substrate table WT which is held relative to the reference frame RF, as illustrated in Figure 1, in a constant position using the wafer stage interferometer system IF. Meanwhile, the reference mask is moved in the mask stage to successive markers and the position of the encoder noted and compared to the pre-calibrated position of the marker on the reference mask. The position of the markers on the reference mask can be pre-calibrated to an absolute length standard, offline and on a regular basis.